



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

- ART. VII. — 1. *Die Erdkunde im Verhältniss zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen. 9ter Theil, 3tes Buch. West-Asien.* VON CARL RITTER. Berlin : 1840. pp. xx, 1048. (Geography in its relation to Nature and to the History of Man. Part IX. Book 3. Western Asia. By CARL RITTER.)
2. *A Residence of Eight Years in Persia among the Nestorian Christians ; with Notices of the Muhammedans.* By Rev. JUSTIN PERKINS. *With a Map and 27 Plates.* Andover : Allen, Morrill, and Wardwell. 1843. 8vo. pp. xviii, 512.

WHEN the ten thousand Greeks, after the battle of Cunaxa and the death of the younger Cyrus, set out upon their retreat, which has been rendered so famous by the pen of Xenophon, they marched for several days northward through the plain that skirts the eastern bank of the Tigris. Having advanced some distance to the north of the site of ancient Nineveh, over against the modern Mosul, and being harassed by the constant attacks of the Persian cavalry, which followed them with restless vigor, the Greeks suddenly quitted the plain country, and turning eastward ascended the Karduchian mountains, among which they pursued their course northward towards the Euxine sea. Here they were secure from the further attacks of the Persian cavalry, and found themselves among tribes of independent mountaineers, — first the Karduchians, who manifested a hostile disposition, and then the Chaldæans and others, with whom they made a league.\*

These same mountains, at the present day, constitute the almost inaccessible region of northern Kurdistân, lying between the plains of the Tigris on the west and those of Armenia on the east. They are inhabited chiefly by the rude and warlike Kurds (pronounced *Koords*), in whose independent and lawless character it is not difficult to recognize the same traits which of old distinguished the Karduchi and Chaldæans of Xenophon. These, and the close resemblance of the names, leave little room to doubt as to the

---

\* Xenoph. *Anab.* lib. III. c. 4. Rennel's *Illustrations of the History of the Expedition of Cyrus*, Lond. 1816.

identity of the modern Kurds with those ancient tribes. The Kurds are wild and fierce barbarians, given to war and plunder ; they delight in horses, and are fearless, but unskilful, riders. There is little stretch of imagination requisite, to suppose that the prophet Habakkuk had the same national characteristics in view, when describing the ancient Chaldeans of Mesopotamia, who apparently derived their origin from the same mountains.

“ For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans,  
A bitter and hasty nation,  
Marching through the breadth of the earth  
To possess dwellings not their own.  
Fearful and terrible are they ;  
Their statutes and decrees go forth only from themselves.  
Swifter than leopards are their horses,  
And fiercer than the evening wolves.  
Their horsemen prance proudly ;  
Their horsemen come from far, they fly,  
As the eagle pounceth upon his prey.  
They come forth all for violence ;  
The host of their faces is forward !  
They gather captives as the sand.  
And they scoff at kings,  
And princes are a scorn unto them.  
They laugh at every strong-hold,  
They cast up mounds and take it.” — Hab. i. 6–10.

It is only within the few last years that these Kurdish mountains have been penetrated by the enterprise of modern travellers. It has been known, indeed, since the days of the indefatigable Niebuhr, that a portion of them is inhabited by a remnant of the ancient Nestorian branch of the great Syrian church ; but the reputation of these Christians, surrounded as they are by warlike and blood-thirsty tribes, has been little better than that of their neighbours ; and has aided to shut up the country from the approach of Europeans. It was the missionary spirit of the present age, that first sought out these secluded followers of the Christian name in their mountain fastnesses ; and, in so doing, first enabled the eye of science to penetrate into the recesses of this land of deep valleys, rushing streams, and rugged mountains. This was the result of American enterprise. Dr. Grant first entered and passed through the country from west to east, in 1839 ;

made a second visit to it in 1840 ; and in 1841 returned to take up his permanent abode among the Nestorians of that region as a missionary and physician. In 1840, also, the same region was visited by Mr. Ainsworth, the active agent of the Royal Geographical Society of London.\*

From the reports of Dr. Grant and Mr. Ainsworth, it appears that the mountainous tract, in the centre of which the Nestorians dwell, is, on a rough estimate, nearly quadrangular, and about equidistant from the lakes of Van and Oroomiah on the north and east, and from the Tigris on the west. The highest mountains apparently are in the eastern part, and especially in the northeast ; rising to the height of ten or eleven thousand feet above the sea ; while the average elevation of the region of table-land around them is between six and seven thousand feet. In the same quarters are the sources of the larger and longer streams flowing to the Tigris ; while those descending to the lake of Oroomiah on the east are smaller and shorter. To the Tigris run two main streams, cleaving the high mountain region to its base, and finding their way along the bottoms of the deep chasm thus formed. The chief of these is the Great Zâb (Zabatus of Xenophon) ; which, with its wide lateral valleys and streams, drains all that part of the country seen by Dr. Grant and Mr. Ainsworth. North of this, rising northwest of Jûlamerk, is the Khabûr, a stream of the same character, but with a shorter course, running southwest to the Tigris below Jezireh. The inquiries of Dr. Grant afford the first correct information as to this stream, which is wrongly laid down on all previous maps.†

The uplands of this region, it seems, when one leaves the valleys and ravines of the streams, consist of a species of table-land, on which much pasture grows in summer. The villages and permanent dwellings of the inhabitants are all in the valleys and near the streams, and are built of stone ; but in summer they drive their flocks to the *Zozan*, or pastures above, and dwell there for a season in tents ; not very unlike the peasants among the Alpine regions of Switzerland.

---

\* See Dr. Grant's work, *The Nestorians*, New York, 1842. The Report of Mr. Ainsworth is found in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London. Vol. XI. P. I. p. 21. Lond. 1841.

† Another river Khabûr descends from the mountains in the north of Mesopotamia, and enters the Euphrates at Circesium. This latter is the *Chaboras* of the Greeks, and the *Chebar* and *Habor* of the Hebrews.

The Nestorians of these fastnesses everywhere appear like other independent mountaineers, rude, fierce, and indomitable, yet kind-hearted and hospitable, with many peculiar virtues and customs arising out of their seclusion from the world and the pressure of external foes. No one, we think, who reads the reports of their manners, and customs, and character, can fail to be struck with their close resemblance to other Christian tribes in like circumstances ; particularly the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, the Mainotes of Greece, and the Montenegrins of the Illyrian coast. Like the latter people, they have their own patriarch, to whom alone they owe allegiance, and who is both the spiritual and temporal head of the nation. And, like all these rude tribes, they have the custom of blood-revenge, which, when a person is slain, requires the next of kin to slay the murderer without mercy. The prevalence of this ancient custom among these wild tribes bearing the Christian name, and also among the Druzes of Lebanon, the Bedawin of Mount Sinai and the deserts, as well as in other heathen nations, seems to be a manifestation of an instinctive law implanted by the Creator in the human breast, and made known also in his word ; “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” In the absence of regular government and of all public penal justice, this law shows itself among rude nations written on the heart, and devolving for its execution upon those most interested in its maintenance.

But besides these independent Nestorians of the mountains, who thus acknowledge no authority even in temporal matters, save that of their own patriarch, and who bear among their neighbours the proud title of *Ashiret*, “the tributeless,” a large body of the same race are found in the plains and region on the west of the mountains, in the vicinity of Mosul, where they are subject to the Turks. These, however, for the most part, more than a century ago gave in their adhesion to the Pope of Rome ; and their patriarch, still residing at el-Kôsh, acknowledges his supremacy. The Pope bestowed upon them, in return, the venerable, but unmeaning, title of Chaldeans, which they now claim ; although they were and are truly nothing more than papal Nestorians, or Nestorian Catholics. Niebuhr fell in with them ; and gave to European scholars the first intimation that the Syriac

was yet a living and spoken language. His account, however, was little heeded.\*

On the other side of the mountains, too, the Nestorians have descended towards the east ; and occupy, in part, the fertile plain which stretches between the mountain-barrier and the lake of Oroomiah. These have long been subject to the Persian government ; and although they acknowledge the authority of the patriarch of the mountains in spiritual matters, yet they have little intercourse with him ; inasmuch as prudential motives prevent him from entering the Persian territory, and them from often visiting the mountains. Their spirit of independence has long been broken ; and they bear submissively, like other *rayahs*, the frequent caprice and cruelty of their Muhammedan masters.

Of the works named at the head of this article, the first is the latest volume of the great work of the celebrated Ritter, on *Comparative Geography*, or Geography in its relations to nature and to the history of man. The preparation of this work is one of those colossal enterprises, for which the period allotted to the days of one man is not sufficient. The excellent author, than whom no man living enjoys to a wider extent the respect and affection of his contemporaries, has devoted to it the best energies and years of a life already far advanced beyond the middle point ; and the work is still remote from its completion, even in respect to the Old World. The first edition, published in 1817–18, comprised Africa and part of Asia, in two volumes. A second edition of the part on Africa, greatly enlarged, appeared in 1822, as an independent work ; but has already been for many years out of print. Eastern Asia has also been completed in a second edition in five parts ; and the volume before us is the third upon Western Asia. A fourth, understood to be nearly or quite ready, is yet to appear, comprising Syria and Asia Minor. The plan of the author then leads him to Europe ; the greater part of which region he has himself visited in person, in reference to this very work, excepting only, indeed, the Spanish peninsula, Russia, and perhaps Poland.

It has long been matter of regret to the friends of Ritter's fame, that he should thus have expended his earliest and best

---

\* *Reisebeschreibung*. II. p. 352. Comp. Hoffmann : *Gramm Syr.* p. 34 et seq.

energies upon just those portions of the world where the progress of modern discovery has been most extensive and rapid ; so much so, indeed, as often to change, in the course of a few years, the whole character of the descriptive geography of large regions. Thus his *Africa*, having been last published in 1822, embraces none of the information brought to light by the more recent and highly important exploring expeditions ; and, therefore, can be in no degree satisfactory to a person seeking to acquaint himself with the present state of knowledge, as to either the physical, or civil and moral features of that continent. The same is true to a certain extent, already, of the volumes on *Asia* ; and will be more strikingly so ten years hence. The portals of this ancient cradle of our race, from the *Bosphorus* on the west, to *China* on the east, are with every year thrown open more and more widely ; and its interior recesses, becoming more accessible, are already developing their unknown or long forgotten features to the scientific gaze of multitudes of travellers. It is this very profusion and prodigality of ever new materials, superseding his former labors or demanding their revision and enlargement, that has so long kept Ritter back from entering upon the description of *Europe*. There, at least, every thing has been thoroughly explored ; no new regions, nor mountains, nor rivers, nor nations, remain to be discovered ; and although empires and kingdoms may rise and fall, and the land-marks of nations be changed or annihilated, yet the great physical features of nature will remain as they now are known, and the characters of the races inhabiting the various regions are too fixed to permit any sudden moral revolution. A work on *Europe* on the plan of Ritter, carrying out his general principles and embodying the results of his own long continued personal observation, would possess a permanency of value to which the previous volumes can never attain ; and would remain a store-house and standard for future generations. May his days be spared to complete it !  
*Serus in calum redeas !*

The volume before us comprises a synopsis of all the information extant, as to the regions inhabited by the Nestorians, up to the time of its publication in 1840. In the additions at the close, also, notice is taken of the letter of Dr. Grant, describing his own journey through the mountains, read before the London Geographical Society, in April of

that same year. We subjoin here a brief view of the previous visits made, or attempted, to those regions, and of the sources of information hitherto possessed.

The earliest accounts of modern times date back not so far as the middle of the last century, and were gathered on the western side of the mountains. Those first given to the public were from the accurate Niebuhr, who was at Mosul in March, 1766, and collected information in respect to several of the districts in this unknown tract ; the general correctness of which subsequent inquiry has only tended to confirm.\* During the same *decennium*, Romish missionaries had established themselves among the Kurds on the western quarter, where they continued to labor for many years. Pater Leopold Soldini went thither in 1760, and died in 1779, at Zakhû, situated, according to Dr. Grant, on an island in the Khabûr, not far above its entrance into the Tigris. He was followed, in 1764, by Pater Maurizio Garzoni, who fixed himself at Amâdieh, near the river Zâb, where he remained for eighteen years, devoting himself to missionary labors among the Kurds, and to the study of their language ; of which he prepared a grammar, afterwards published at Rome. The preface to this work contains information respecting the various Kurdish tribes, and also scanty notices of the mountain Christians, whom the good Pater describes as sunk in every species of vice and crime.†

The next accounts are from the present century, and within our own recollections. In 1820, the enterprising Mr. Rich, during his visit to southern Kurdistân and the region of Mosul, was able to collect valuable information respecting the mountains ; and has given drawings of a Nestorian man and woman from that region, in their native costume. He received also from the lips of a Tartar courier, who had once passed through the mountains, an account of his route by way of Amâdieh and Jûlamerk to the Lake of Van, coinciding very nearly with that subsequently pursued by Dr. Grant. This enterprise of the Tartar was con-

---

\* Niebuhr : *Reisebeschreibung*. Bd II. p. 332.

† P. M. Garzoni : *Grammatica e Vocabulario della Lingua Kurda*. Roma, 1787. On the basis of this Grammar and a few manuscripts, Professors Roediger and Pott of Halle have published a series of articles on the Kurdish language, entitled *Kurdische Studien*, in the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Bd. III. IV. See also Ritter's *Erdkunde*, IX. p. 656. The Kurdish language belongs to the Persian family, and has many dialects.



sidered by the Orientals as one of very great hazard, and the man himself was not a little proud of having achieved it. He described the mountaineers as wilder than any tribes among the Kurds and Arabs ; and regarded it as a matter of wonder, that they should have suffered him to enter their land without being murdered, and still more to pass through it without being robbed.\*

The subsequent accounts come to us from the eastern side of the mountains ; from which quarter the later attempts to penetrate the country have mostly been made. In 1829, Schulz, the intrepid Oriental traveller, who visited the east under the commission of the Paris Academy, was treacherously assassinated in the vicinity of Bash Kalleh, and the report of this murder, which rung through Europe, magnified still more the horrors of robbery and bloodshed already connected with the reputation of these mountains, and served to confirm the stories of their wild and inaccessible character. Having spent eight months at Tabriz, pursuing the study of the Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish languages, Schulz passed around the south side of the Lake of Oroomiah to that city, and, entering the mountains, reached Jûlamerk without hinderance ; though by what route is not known. He is reported also to have visited the Nestorian patriarch, then residing at Kochannes, a few hours north of Jûlamerk.† The principal Kurdish chief, whose capital is Jûlamerk, but whose frequent residence is at Bash Kalleh, received him hospitably, and gave him an escort to accompany him to that castle and so back to Persia. But whether Schulz was regarded as an agent of the Persian government sent to spy out the character and strength of the land, or as himself possessing wealth enough to excite the cupidity of the chieftain and his followers, the escort, it seems, received secret orders to put him to death. On the way he was allured into a nook of the mountains, under the pretext of pointing out to him antiquities, and there shot through the back, while his companions were cut down. His baggage had been permitted to proceed meantime to Bash Kal-

\* C. J. Rich: *Narrative of a Residence in Kurdistan*, Vol. I. pp. 275 – 280. Lond. 1836. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, IX. pp. 641, 659 – 663.

† Smith and Dwight, II. 253. The patriarch now resides at Diz, a village about twenty miles east of Jûlamerk, in the Hakkury district, on the other side of the Zâb. Grant's *Nestorians*, p. 99. Perkins, p. 18.

leh, where his servant and two Persian officers were in like manner despatched. Seven or eight persons in all were thus murdered. This bloody and cowardly deed took place in November, 1829.

Some Armenians, who were compelled to bury the bodies, gave the information to their priests living near the Persian frontier ; and by them it was transmitted to Tabriz. The Persian crown-prince, Abbas Mirza, immediately sent a threatening message to the Khan of the Kurds ; who caused the horses and a portion of the effects of the murdered party to be delivered up. Among these were the journal and some other papers of Schulz, extending, however, only to Oroomiah. These have since reached Paris, and are understood to be in the hands of Julius Mohl, the celebrated Orientalist, for publication. The facts respecting the death of Schulz were afterwards collected by Major Willock, then British resident at Tabriz, and first published in 1834.\*

Dr. Grant passed near the place where Schulz was murdered, "in the valley of a small creek." An Armenian, the father of those who aided in the interment of the bodies, informed him that a small heap of stones marks the spot. In consequence of the requisition from Persia, the immediate agent in the murder was put to death by those who had instigated him to the deed. Had this man been alive, Dr. Grant supposes his own safety would have been doubtful. The desire of plunder was sometimes assigned as the motive of the murder ; but intelligent Armenians and Nestorians related to Dr. Grant, that Schulz had just made a visit to the orpiment mines, and that the Kurds believed the yellow mineral to be gold, and that he would cause an army to come and take possession of their country. This impression was strengthened by the circumstance, that he was seen making scientific observations, measuring their castles, and writing down his notes.† The famous chieftain Nûrûlah Bey, who furnished the escort to Schulz, and treacherously ordered his death, was visited by Dr. Grant in his castle at Bash Kalleh ; where, as we are happy to be in-

---

\* In the *Journal of the London Geographical Society*, Vol. IV. pp. 134-137. Lond. 1834. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, IX. p. 649, *et seq.*

† Grant's *Nestorians*, pp. 123, 124.

formed, the Doctor was able, by the power of medicine, and particularly by the force of an emetic, to convert him into a stanch friend and protector.\*

In February, 1832, Col. Monteith, who was then occupied in exploring the adjacent portions of Persia, made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the mountains. He was everywhere met by the Kurds with repulses and treachery ; and desisted from his enterprise only after being twice attacked by hostile parties. He was able, however, to collect valuable information as to the topography of the region and the character of its inhabitants, especially the Nestorians ; and made the acquaintance of Mar Shimon, the predecessor of the present patriarch of that name, on a visit to Persia, where he was detained, and afterwards died. This information is embodied in the map and memoir of Col. Monteith, published by the Royal Geographical Society of London.†

In July, 1836, Col. Shiel, also, was desirous to pass by the direct route from Oroomiah to Mosul by way of Jûlamerk, and gathered information as to the country with that view. But the character of the mountaineers, “ the free and brave Chaldeans ”‡ of antiquity, was pictured to him in such terrific colors, and the difficulties of the route so magnified, that he was led to give up the attempt, and take the longer way through Van and Bitlis.§

But before this time, and also before the murder of Schulz, the Rev. Dr. Walsh, chaplain of the British embassy at Constantinople, had collected some accounts respecting the Nestorians, from a person he met at Pera, whom he calls the “ Bishop of the Chaldeans,” but of whom we learn nothing further. His information relates more to the modern Chaldeans ; but includes also notices of the mountains, and of the Nestorians and their patriarch. These accounts were published ; and incidentally have had an important bearing both upon our acquaintance with the

\* Grant's *Nestorians*, p. 109, *et seq.*

† Journal of the R. Geogr. Soc. of Lond. Vol. III. pp. 51–54. Lond. 1833. Map: Parts of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, etc., from Trigonometrical Surveys, 1814–1828; engraved at the expense of the R. Geogr. Soc. Lond. 1833. See Ritter's *Erdkunde*, IX. pp. 641, *et seq.*, 664, *et seq.*

‡ Xen. *Anab.* IV. 3. Οἱ Χαλδαῖοι ἐλευθεροὶ τε καὶ ἀλκιμοί.

§ Lieut. Col Shiel: *Notes on a Journey from Tabriz through Kurdistan*, etc., in Journal of the R. Geogr. Soc. of Lond. Vol. VIII. p. 54. Lond. 1838.

Nestorians, and upon the intellectual and moral prospects of that remarkable people.\*

A slight paragraph, comprising the substance of Dr. Walsh's statements, went the rounds of the American newspapers ; and thus met, as we have been informed, the eye of one of the secretaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, established at Boston. This led to further inquiry ; and the notices of Dr. Walsh were obtained and reprinted.† The Board, at that time, were prosecuting inquiries throughout the greater part of Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece ; and soon concluded to extend them farther east, to the Armenian and Georgian churches ; to which were now to be added the Nestorians and modern Chaldeans. As their agent for these important researches, they selected the Rev. Eli Smith, who had been several years a missionary in the East, and has since become still more widely known by his residence and travels in the Holy Land ; and also the Rev. H. G. O. Dwight, now the well-known missionary to the Armenians in Constantinople. The letter of instructions to these gentlemen was dated January 19th, 1830 ; and, after enumerating several of the main topics to which they were to direct their inquiries, it contained the following passage : “ Another company of wandering shepherds will present themselves to your attention in Kurdistan, southward of Armenia. A hundred thousand of the Kurds are said to be Nestorians, subject to hereditary patriarchs. So large a body of nominal Christians deserve a visit to the residence of at least one of their spiritual heads. You will be the more inclined to such a visit, as it is in that part of Asia we are to look for the numerous and independent sect of Christians, called Chaldeans, of whom Dr. Walsh published an interesting account some years since. His account, as it was not founded on personal observation, needs such a confirmation as you may possibly be able to furnish.” ‡

The results of the journey did not, indeed, confirm the anticipations on which the above paragraph was founded ;

---

\* Notices by Dr. Walsh in the *Literary Gazette*. Also in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, Genève, 1826. Literat. T. xxxi. pp. 395 – 400. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, IX. p. 666.

† In the *Missionary Herald* for 1826, p. 120.

‡ *Missionary Herald* for 1830, p. 75.

but they did far greater service to the cause of truth, by bringing out the facts of the case ; and also to the Nestorian people themselves, by enabling the Board to act understandingly in their behalf, and take efficient measures for elevating them in the scale of intellectual, as well as moral, cultivation.

Messrs. Smith and Dwight left Constantinople in May, 1830 ; and travelled by land through Asia Minor, by way of Tokat, to Erzeroom, a distance of about seven hundred and eighty miles, which they then accomplished with a Tartar in twenty-three days, including a stop of two days at Tokat. *Now* a noble steamer takes the traveller in sixty hours across the Black Sea to Trebizond ; from which place to Erzeroom is a distance of about two hundred and twenty miles. This latter journey Smith and Dwight, on their return, accomplished in six days, and Mr. Perkins, with his family, in eight. They passed the summer and autumn in Armenia and Georgia, chiefly at the larger towns, as Tiflis and Shusha, visiting also Nakchevân, Erivan, and the great Armenian convent twelve miles from the latter city, near the northern base of Mount Ararat ; from which, indeed, Professor Parrot afterwards ascended that mountain.\* Early in December, they repaired to Tabriz, where they passed the winter, partly in consequence of the illness of Mr. Smith ; and where the only information they could obtain as to the Nestorians was, that a considerable body of them were accessible in the provinces of Salmas and Oroomiah. They determined to visit them ; and for this purpose left Tabriz on the 4th of March, 1831.

The Lake of Oroomiah is surrounded by plains ; and these are shut in by lofty mountains, lying usually at some distance from the shore. On the western side, spurs from the Kurdish mountains run down in two places quite to the lake, forming promontories in it, and dividing the great plain into three ; composing the districts of Salmas on the north, Oroomiah in the middle, and Sûlduz on the south. The route of the travellers from Tabriz was around the northern end of the lake to Dilman, the capital of the district of Salmas. At Khosrova, a village about two miles distant, they first came in contact with the Chaldeans, or

---

\* See *Reise zum Ararat, von Dr. Friederich Parrot*, Berlin, 1834.

papal Nestorians ; that village being the residence of the bishop of all those of this name on the east of the Kurdish mountains. An old man with a long Kurdish cap, green turban, and ragged sheepskin pelisse, came out to welcome them. It was the bishop of this wide diocese ; but, being too poor himself to lodge them, he referred them to his priest for a room.

These two ecclesiastics, bishop and priest, living here not in dignity, but in squalid poverty and filth, furnish a striking example of the powerful means and influence which the Romish Church employs to spread her nets throughout the East, and lead captive unenlightened nations at her will. The bishop had been educated at Rome, and, having lived some time at Aleppo, Bagdad, and Mosul, spoke both Italian and Arabic with considerable fluency. The priest, too, though a native of the village, had been twelve years in the college of the Propaganda at Rome, and spoke Italian with ease. He had also sent two young men of the village to Rome for education ; and these were now about to return. The whole population of the village, about one hundred and fifty families, were Chaldeans ; and about one hundred other families were scattered through the district. In the adjacent province of Oroomiah, there were about two hundred families of the same sect. These were the whole of the Bishop's flock, on the east of the mountains.

But the good Bishop had, at that time, a "thorn in the flesh," in the shape of a rival or irregular bishop, who, at first, had crept into the fold without license from the Pope ; had been, therefore, excommunicated ; but, by lining well the pockets of the Pope's vicar at Bagdad, had obtained a favorable representation of his case at Rome ; and was permitted to retain the rank of sub-bishop in this diocese. "And here he has been," said the Bishop, "for many, many years ; and as often as I have said *white*, he has invariably said *black*."— There had, also, been another papal bishop in the region, by the name of Shevris, a native of Sert, without a diocese, whom Mr. Perkins describes as a Jesuit missionary. He, too, had resided twelve years in Rome, and had in some way become connected with the British and Foreign Bible Society, by which he was employed to translate the New Testament into the Kurdish language. But he wrought as a hireling, and his translation

proved worthless. He is said to have died of the plague at Tabriz, in the year 1830. We have not at hand the means of verifying the fact; but we suppose this man to have been the same "bishop of the Chaldeans" from whom Dr. Walsh gathered his information as above related; and also the same by whom Mr. Leeves, the active agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the East, sent Bibles, in 1824, from Constantinople, for distribution in Tabriz and the vicinity, and whom he commissioned to procure a Kurdish translation of the New Testament to be made. The Bishop preferred, it would seem, to undertake it himself, at Oroomiah, with the help of an intelligent Kurd, Molla Muhammed, of the Hakkary district; making the Arabic Gospels the basis of the new version. The translation of the Gospels, such as it is, was completed; but no Kurd has yet been found who could understand it. The Society is said to have a copy in London; and other copies were sent for examination to the German missionaries, Hörnle and others, at Shoosha, who had occupied themselves with the Kurdish people and language. Roediger and Pott, in preparing their "Kurdish Studies," were unable to get sight of the manuscript.\*

After visiting the ancient town of Salmas, now only a large village two miles distant from Khosrova, Messrs. Smith and Dwight crossed the spur of the mountains running down to the lake, which separates the districts of Salmas and Oroomiah; and found themselves among the Nestorian villages in the northern part of the latter. They stopped at Jamalava, then the temporary abode of a bishop, whose proper residence was at the neighbouring village of Gavalan.† He was absent at the moment; but a priest received them hospitably, and gave them the choice of a room in his house, or a stable. They chose the latter; and it was soon filled with friendly Nestorians, eager to see and converse with them. They found here also an excellent interpreter, a native of Mardin, and nephew of the Bishop Shevris

---

\* *Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society* for 1825, App. p. 62; *Id.* for 1827, p. xliv., App. pp. 58, 75; *Id.* for 1830, p. lx.; *Id.* for 1836, p. xlvii.; *Baseler Magazin*, 1836, No. III. p. 492; Roediger in *Zeitschr. für die Kunde des Morgenl.* III. p. 15; Smith and Dwight's *Researches*, II. p. 189; Perkins' *Residence*, etc., p. 350.

† Perkins' *Residence*, p. 172.

above mentioned. He spoke Arabic fluently ; the language of the Nestorians was his mother tongue ; and all parties, too, were more or less acquainted with the Turkish. The bishop, who proved to be the son of the priest, soon returned and welcomed the strangers ; and the two days spent by them at Jamalava more than realized the pleasure they had anticipated from visiting the Nestorians. "The friendliness, simplicity, and unreserved frankness of the bishop and his flock," says Mr. Smith, "and the amount of information he patiently allowed us to draw from him, by an almost uninterrupted series of questions, gave a deep interest to our intercourse." Our readers will hardly need to be told, that this bishop was no other than Mar Yohannan, who has recently visited the United States ; where the same traits of "friendliness, simplicity, and unreserved frankness," mingled with not a little of Oriental shrewdness, were abundantly conspicuous.

The travellers proceeded to the villages of Ada and Ardishai, where they had intercourse with the bishops and Nestorians of those places, which served to confirm the information and favorable impression received at Jamalava. They were prevented from visiting Oroomiah itself by the prevalence of the plague in that town. And although extremely anxious to extend their journey into the heart of the Kurdish mountains, and visit in person the patriarch, Mar Shimon, then residing at Kochannes, they were reluctantly compelled to give up their purpose, in consequence of the universally alleged impracticability of entering the mountains, coupled with the temporary revolt of some of the adjacent Kurdish tribes, and the prevalence of the plague. The travellers, therefore, returned by another route to Tabriz ; which they left again on the 12th of April for Constantinople, and arrived at Trebizond May 7th, 1831.

The printed report of the journey of Messrs. Smith and Dwight was drawn up by the former gentleman, partly at Malta and partly during his subsequent visit to the United States in 1832 ; and was published in January, 1833.\*

---

\* *Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and Rev. H. G. O. Dwight in Armenia ; including a Journey through Asia Minor, and into Georgia and Persia, with a Visit to the Nestorian Christians of Oroomiah and Salmas.* 2 Vols. Boston. 1833. — Also reprinted in London.



The work contains a large amount of information in regard to the countries visited, and their inhabitants ; and is well known to be one of the most accurate and trustworthy books of travels which have appeared in modern times. Nor has the information furnished by it been, as yet, superseded by the reports of other travellers ; so that Ritter, writing in 1840, justly refers to it as affording the latest and best accounts of these interesting regions. Mr. Perkins, also, who has had the best of all opportunities to judge of the value and accuracy of the work, pronounces it to be "one of very rare merit, on the countries and subjects of which it treats." The work has now been out of print for some years ; and we cannot but express our surprise, that the call of an enlightened community should not, as yet, have led the publishers to issue a second edition.

The important report of their agents, sustained by the personal representations of Mr. Smith, induced the Board to take measures for the speedy establishment of a mission among the Nestorians of the plain of Oroomiah. Mr. Smith was charged with preparing the details of the plan, and the selection of a missionary. His choice fell upon the Rev. Jonas Perkins, then a tutor in Amherst College ; and, in September, 1833, Messrs. Smith and Perkins, with their wives, embarked together at Boston for Malta ; the former to resume his labors in Syria, and the latter to proceed, by way of Constantinople and Trebizond, to Oroomiah.

The work, the title of which stands last at the head of this article, comprises the narrative and observations of Mr. Perkins, from the time of his embarkation at Boston, in 1833, during his residence of eight years in Persia, to his return, on a visit to the United States, in the spring of 1842. This is another contribution to the progress of literature and science from the pen of a missionary ; and we cannot but consider it as one of great importance and utility. Every page displays evidence, that the delicate office of selecting a missionary for the very peculiar field of labor among the Nestorians was successfully executed ; and the work exhibits the author as a man of a cultivated, well disciplined, and well balanced mind, and of great gentleness of temper, peculiarly adapted to win his way, and be the pioneer of literature and science to a people whose vernacular language was yet to be written down ; and the herald of Gospel light

and truth to a nation which had long sat in darkness and the shadow of death.

We cannot be expected here to enter into an extended notice of all the parts of such a volume, containing five hundred closely printed pages. Nor would we be understood to imply, that the work, excellent as it is, might not have been made better and more useful, had the author been placed in more favorable circumstances while preparing it for the press. Indeed, nothing could be more *unfavorable* to such a purpose than writing sometimes "an hour at a public house, while waiting for a stage-coach ; at other times, in the cabin of a steamer, among scores of passengers ; and often revising the manuscript while travelling in railroad cars." He has thus been led to transcribe into the work large portions of his daily journal ; where kindred facts lie scattered throughout many pages, instead of being brought together and arranged in classes, — a process which would have diminished the size of the book, but increased its value. Nor are we quite sure as to the importance of giving to the public, in 1843, the detailed journal of a voyage from Boston to Malta and Constantinople in 1833, ten years before. Neither Malta, nor Syra, nor Constantinople, nor the navigation of the Levant, is now what it was ten years ago. The noble steamers of England, and France, and Austria, and Turkey, now foam gallantly, and almost daily, in all directions through the Mediterranean and the Black Sea ; and the Dardanelles and Bosphorus are, or soon will be, covered with them, almost like our own Hudson. This one cause has been sufficient to change the face of things, within the last ten years, along the coasts of the Levant ; to say nothing of the other mighty influences which have been at work during the same interval.

But, notwithstanding all this, the book is written with such artlessness and truthfulness, that no one can hesitate a moment to yield full credence to its minutest statements. We doubt not but that the author carried this kindliness of temper and frankness with him from his own native hills ; and yet we would not like to say how much of it he may have imbibed from the simple-hearted people among whom he has labored. At any rate, there has been, in the arrangements of Providence, a peculiar adaptation between the

teacher and the taught. But we must confine ourselves to some general notices.\*

After a residence of five months at Constantinople, Mr. Perkins proceeded, in May, 1834, to Trebizond, in an English schooner, performing the voyage in twelve days, instead of the sixty hours now occupied by the steamers. After leaving Erzeroom, he was induced, very unfortunately as it turned out, to leave the direct road to Tabriz, because of disturbances among the Kurds, and turn aside into that portion of Georgia which had recently been taken possession of by Russia. Here, from the moment he reached the frontier until he again left it on the other side, he and his estimable lady were subjected to a series of constant annoyances and oppression from Russian boors clothed with a little brief authority, — a malignant cruelty, indeed, to which we, although not unversed in the mysteries and annoyances of Austrian custom-houses and Asiatic quarantine and travel, have never known a parallel. Mr. Perkins justly remarks, that it is “the boorish deputies and subordinate officers, that are usually the agents of oppression in the Russian provinces”; and “that the bad character of the lower Russian officers, in the distant provinces of Georgia, is proverbial.” We would add, that the same bad character is proverbial throughout the whole vast Russian empire; and it is a well-known fact, that all the menial officials connected with the revenue of that mighty power are, with forethought, so inadequately paid, as to make it their interest to defraud the government by receiving bribes from the traveller, the merchant, and the smuggler. To one *au fait* in these matters, it is obvious, from the whole of Mr. Perkins’ statement, that the sole object of the harpies, into whose hands he thus fell, was, in the beginning at least, to extort money from him. Had

---

\* We have a single verbal criticism to make. Mr. Perkins, in citing the words of a writer, sometimes introduces them by an inversion; e. g. “Says the Rev. S. L. Merrick, in a note to the author, ‘My attention has of late been turned,’” etc. p. 5; “Says Dr. Robinson; ‘The Chaldaic of Daniel and Ezra is hardly a fair standard,’” p. 13. According to our judgment, such inversions, at the beginning of a sentence in prose, are not in good taste, and are allowable only in poetry. The extracts would read better thus; “The Rev. S. L. Merrick says, in a note to the author,” etc.; “The Chaldaic of Daniel and Ezra,” says Dr. Robinson, “is hardly a fair standard,” etc. We have ventured this criticism, because we perceive that this mode of writing is creeping into many of the religious journals and reports of the present day.

he then been aware of this fact, and of the proper method of proceeding, a few *douceurs*, of far less amount than his detention and the sending back of his effects ultimately cost him, would doubtless have removed all difficulties, and have made his journey, as it ought to have been, one of six days among roses, instead of four weeks among thorns and thistles.\*

But whatever difficulty and annoyance may have arisen to the travellers, from the malignant disappointment of Russian menials, these were more than counterbalanced, on their arrival at Tabriz, by the courtesy and efficient kindness of the British ambassador and his suite, first Sir John Campbell, then Mr. Ellis, and afterwards Sir John McNeill. Mr. Perkins brought to the ambassador letters of introduction ; and, during the whole period of his residence in that country, the broad shield of British protection was kindly and effectually thrown over him and his associates in the mission, accompanied by constant acts of personal kindness and respect which do honor to both parties. The Russian embassy, too, was prompt to counteract the brutality of the subalterns on the Georgian frontier ; and, during the absence of the British ambassador in consequence of the siege of Herat, the American missionaries enjoyed the official protection of Russia.

Tabriz continued to be the residence of Mr. Perkins from his arrival, in August, 1834, until the middle of November, 1835 ; and he has incorporated into his work a full account of that city and its inhabitants, with his observations upon the Persian character in general. On these topics our limits do not permit us to touch. In the month of October, 1834, he made a journey to Oroomiah, in order to acquire a general knowledge of the region and people among whom he was to take up his abode, and also to obtain, if possible, a teacher in the Nestorian language. He was accompanied on this journey by Mr. Haas, one of the German missionaries. Their route was the same as that of Messrs. Smith and Dwight to Khosrova ; here the old Bishop was now

---

\* Since writing the above, we perceive that Mr. Perkins states, in another place (pp. 157, 158), that he did make trial of pecuniary offers ; but, he adds, " money, even, could procure for us neither favor, mercy, nor justice, in Georgia." There was, probably, some mistake in the time or mode of approach.

dead, and only the priest and a monk remained. Thence they proceeded across the mountain to Gavalan, the village of the Bishop, Mar Yohannan, where he was now residing. They reached the village at four o'clock in the morning, when the inhabitants were yet in a profound sleep. But the Bishop, on being called, recollected Smith and Dwight with lively interest, and very cordially welcomed *their friend* to his country and dwelling. Indeed, before the first salutation of welcome had fairly dropped from his lips, with an animated tone he artlessly inquired, "How can you make books for us, in your country, when you do not know our language?" Thus was the missionary providentially conducted, in the outset, to the man above all others prepared to receive him and his message; and who, by his influence, his docility, and simple-hearted kindness, was so well fitted to smooth the path of the stranger, and procure for him a favorable introduction among his people.

In the course of the day spent at Gavalan, Mar Yohannan expressed a strong desire to learn the English language; and so well was Mr. Perkins pleased with his appearance, that he proposed to him to go to Tabriz and be his teacher in Syriac, where, too, he could acquire the English. The Bishop assented, and declared himself ready to set off the next morning. When, accordingly, in the morning, it was suggested to him to get his effects in readiness for a year's residence in the capital, his reply was: "I want nothing but my blanket and three books, and they are soon ready." And so it proved; for, thus equipped, he was mounted and ready to start before the rest of the party. They proceeded to Oroomiah; and made an excursion to the village of Geogtapa, further south, where they waited upon the patriarch Elias of el-Kûsh, then on a visit to this region.\* His reception of the stranger gave him great importance in the eyes of

---

\* *Mar Elias* is the hereditary name and title of the regular descendant of the ancient Nestorian patriarchs of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, now resident at el-Kûsh, north of Mosul. *Mar Shimon* is the hereditary name of the Nestorian patriarch residing in the mountains. The latter was originally a modern rival of the former; but, as the patriarch of el-Kûsh long since gave in his adhesion to the Pope, the Nestorians on the east of the mountains deserted him, and yield allegiance to Mar Shimon. The Elias mentioned above, however, had at this time rejected papacy, and was therefore received with great respect by his former flock. The patriarch of the Chaldeans is called *Mar Yoosuf*, and resides at Diarbekr. Smith and Dwight, Vol. II. pp. 187, 205, *et seq.*

the people. The patriarch and Mr. Perkins conversed together *fluently* for three hours, through the medium of three interpreters ; the former speaking Syriac, which was translated by Mar Yohannan into Turkish, and this again by their Armenian attendant into Armenian, which Mr. Haas rendered into English. From this village, too, the Bishop took with him a young priest, named Abraham, to be his assistant and *servant* at Tabriz, a young man of fine talents, who has proved one of the best and most efficient helpers of the mission. From Oroomiah they proceeded southward to Ardis-hai ; and then, crossing the spur of the Kurdish mountains, entered the province of Sûlduz, and made their way back to Tabriz, around the southern end of the lake.

In the following June, the Bishop and priest returned home ; and the latter immediately commenced teaching *English* in his native village, with good success ! Late in August, Mr. Perkins went to Erzeroom to meet and welcome Dr. Grant and his wife, and Mr. Merrick, his future associates in the missionary work. About the middle of November, 1835, the families removed to the city of Oroomiah, which has ever since continued to be the seat of the mission. The remainder of the volume before us is occupied chiefly with extracts from the journal of Mr. Perkins from that time until June, 1841 ; when, in consequence of the feeble health of Mrs. Perkins, he was induced to undertake the long journey and voyage to their native land, accompanied by their first and steadfast friend, the Bishop, Mar Yohannan. We are happy to know that the influence of the voyage and of her native climate has restored the health of this excellent lady ; while the presence and efforts of her husband at home, and the novel attractions of an Oriental bishop, have not been without their effect in exciting and deepening the interest felt in the situation and prospects of this remnant of an ancient people. Early in March of the present year (1843), Mr. Perkins and his lady, with the Bishop and other new associates, again embarked at Boston on their way back to the plains of Oroomiah.

We should be gratified to introduce here many anecdotes, illustrative of the progress of the mission and the character of the Nestorian people ; but have room only for a few general remarks upon the country and some facts connected with the missionary labors. It must be borne in mind, that

Mr. Perkins has had to do almost solely with the Nestorians of the plain, who are subjects of the Persian rule ; while all that we know of the independent tribes of the mountains has come to us through the more restless enterprise of his colleague, Dr. Grant.

The lake of Oroomiah, the ancient Spautes, is about eighty miles in length from north to south, by about thirty in width. Its waters are shallow in those parts where the shores are low, being not more than six or eight feet in depth. According to Maj. Rawlinson, the greatest depth of water found in any part is four fathoms, while the average is about two fathoms ; but the shores shelve so gradually that even this depth is rarely attained within two miles of the land.\* It has no outlet ; and is surrounded by plains, with lofty mountains rising at no great distance. In the lake are several mountain islands, lifting themselves from the quiet waters at some distance from the shore, and appearing in fine relief. One of them is several miles in extent and contains several villages. The elevation of the lake above the sea is given by Mr. Ainsworth at four thousand three hundred feet.† Its waters are excessively salt, and to the passing traveller exhibit the same qualities as those of the Dead Sea. Next to these, likewise, their specific gravity is greater than that of any known waters. Like the Dead Sea, too, the dull and sluggish waters of this lake are rarely otherwise than calm. No fish can live in them ; yet the lake is frequented by water-fowl in great numbers, particularly the duck and flamingo, which seek their food among the decayed vegetable matter washed down into the lake. The flamingo, especially, is found here in such numbers, that the shore is sometimes seen for miles whitened with a continuous flock of them. They are often taken by placing snares made of hair in the shallow parts of the lake, near the shore.‡

The lake rises, every spring, from three to five or six feet, during the annual rains and melting of the snow on the mountains ; and as these cease, and the heat of summer comes on, it gradually recedes to its former level. In most places, the shores are flat, and only a few feet higher than the water, so that by the rising of the lake they are exten-

---

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. x. 1840. p. 7.

† *Ibid.* Vol. xi. 1841. p. 60.

‡ Perkins, p. 7.

sively overflowed ; and salt marshes exist in many places. As the waters gradually subside, a thin coat of salt is everywhere left upon the ground. The inhabitants take advantage of this circumstance to obtain salt in large quantities. In the autumn small embankments, eight or ten inches high, are thrown up, each enclosing a few acres. These in the spring retain a sufficient quantity of water to deposite a layer of fine white salt, two or three inches thick, which is crystallized during evaporation under the summer's sun. These fields of salt extend sometimes for miles. The incrustation is broken up into pieces, and then shovelled together into heaps. It is carried to market on donkeys ; or else is collected into larger heaps, like a small house, and covered over with mud, which soon hardens and shields it from the weather. Salt, of course, commands a price barely sufficient to cover the cost of transportation. The low land in the immediate vicinity of the lake is everywhere so impregnated with salt, that it produces no vegetation, except a weed which the natives collect and burn to obtain an alkali for making glass.\* A person bathing in this lake finds a crystal coat of salt formed upon his body the moment he rises up ; and, as in the heavy waters of the Dead Sea, he finds it next to impossible to sink.

The three great alluvial plains on the west of the lake, separated from each other by spurs of the Kurdish mountains running down as promontories to the shore, extend up between the mountains like bays ; and their appearance suggests the inquiry whether they were not once covered with water. That which skirts the middle of the lake, the plain of Oroomiah, is about forty miles in length by twenty in breadth in its widest part. The mountains which sweep down to the lake at its extremities are imposing, and enclose it like a vast amphitheatre. This great plain, with the adjacent declivities of the mountains, is said to contain at least three hundred and thirty villages. It is abundantly watered by three large streams, each from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet wide, besides many smaller water-courses. The soil is described as exuberantly fertile, and all under high cultivation ; that is, high considering the clumsy instruments and unthrifty habits of the inhabitants. The staple

---

\* Perkins, pp. 393, 394.



productions are wheat, rice, cotton, tobacco, and the vine, besides a great variety of other fruits. Ten or twelve species of grape are enumerated. They are eaten fresh in their season ; and, being braided by their stems and suspended from the ceilings of the rooms, are kept fresh during the winter ; as we, too, have seen them in the valleys of the French Alps. Vast quantities are also converted into syrup, the *Dibs* of modern Palestine ; while still more, especially the inferior grapes and the gleanings, are made into wine and arrak. Cherries are abundant and excellent ; they ripen usually before the middle of June. Out of a present of some very fine pears, Mr. Perkins measured the largest, and found it twelve inches in circumference. Melons, and especially musk-melons, are much cultivated, and form a favorite article of food ; as does also the cucumber. Besides all these, there are apricots, peaches, apples, quinces, plums, nuts, and other fruits, of the finest flavor and in the most ample abundance.

The cultivation of the plain is necessarily carried on by irrigation ; since rain seldom falls during the summer months. Water is taken from the streams by canals, and carried by minute subdivision to all the fields. The larger canals serve also to turn rude grist-mills. But this abundance of irrigation, and the frequent rice-fields and stagnant pools of water, together with the rapid growth and decay of vegetable matter, cannot but generate a vast amount of miasma ; and thus serve to render unhealthy a climate naturally one of the finest in the world.

The city of Oroomiah lies about twelve miles from the lake, and two from the mountains, in the midst of this beautiful plain, on which the bounties of nature have been so profusely lavished. It contains about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, mostly Muhammedans. The view from elevations back of the city, Mr. Perkins describes as beautiful and imposing in the highest degree. Below him, the eye of the spectator rests upon gardens ; then upon the city half buried in shrubbery ; next it wanders over the vast plain studded with villages, verdant with thousands of orchards, hedges, and clumps of various trees, and waving with illimitable fields of golden grain ; further still it takes in the bright mirror of the placid lake sparkling under the brilliancy of a Persian sky ; and finally the blue mountains far in the dis-

tance beyond the lake. Mr. Ainsworth, too, describes the district of Oroomiah as presenting "an extraordinary scene to a person accustomed to the treeless monotony of the plains of Mesopotamia ; a more fertile region can scarcely be imagined. One vast extent of groves, orchards, vineyards, gardens, rice-grounds, and villages, sometimes with a village-common. It much resembles the best part of Lombardy, between Milan and the Lago Maggiore." \*

Of the Nestorians who inhabit this region, only about six hundred reside in the city ; but they are numerous in the villages. In some cases, a village is occupied by them exclusively ; in others, they dwell among the Muhammedans. Their main occupation is the tillage of the soil ; of which, however, they are not usually the proprietors. The land is mostly held by Muhammedan lords, to whom the Nestorians stand in the relation of serfs, and often suffer from their lawless oppression. The Nestorians, like their Muhammedan neighbours, are a fine-looking race, of good stature, fair complexion, and with features regular, manly, intelligent, and often handsome. The complexion of Mar Yohannan, who visited this country, is said by Mr. Perkins to be considerably darker than that of most Nestorians. They are generous, kind, hospitable, artless, for Asiatics ; and also brave, restless under oppression, and independent in their feelings. The Nestorians of the mountains, too, along with all their wildness and ferocity of character, still possess the same kindness and generosity which distinguish those of the plain. Even there a hungry man will divide his last piece of bread with a stranger or an enemy. It is a pleasing trait, that the Nestorians of the plain, plentifully provided as they are with the means of subsistence, as a matter of calculation, lay in stores for their poorer countrymen of the mountains, who are often driven in winter in large numbers to seek the charity of their brethren in the plain. In their appearance and manners the two classes differ like antipodes. Those of the plain call the mountaineers *wild men*.

There is, of course, great difficulty in estimating the number of the Nestorian population ; of which those in the plain constitute by far the smaller portion. Mr. Perkins gives the following estimate, which is probably as near the truth as

---

\* *Journ. of the R. Geogr. Soc. Lond.* Vol. xi. 1841. pp. 61.

any that can be made ; namely, in the district of Tiaree, the largest and most populous of all among the mountains, fifty thousand ; in all the other districts of the mountains, sixty thousand ; in the province of Oroomiah, between thirty and forty thousand ; in all, about one hundred and forty thousand. The Nestorian population of the plain is said to be rapidly increasing, by the permanent emigration going on from many of the mountain districts. Oppressed and overrun in those regions more and more by their Kurdish masters, they fly to their brethren in Oroomiah, as to a generous asylum.

Such are the feeble remains of one of the great branches of the ancient Syrian church ; of that branch, indeed, which, in purity of doctrine, and activity of early missionary effort, may be said to have approached nearer to the characteristics of Protestantism, than any other of the ancient churches. To this day the language of their ritual is the ancient Syriac. In it they possess the Scriptures (in the ancient *Peshito* version), their other church books, and a few rare copies of some of the works of the Fathers, and of books of the Martyrs, commentaries, lexicons, etc. Few as these books are, their readers are hardly more numerous. According to Mr. Perkins, not more than one in two hundred of the people can read, and in general only the clergy ; and even of these, the majority of the priests can only chant their devotions in the ancient Syriac, without knowing the meaning. Some even of the *bishops* in the mountains are still in this predicament. And yet the ancient Syriac is not only the language of their literature, but also of their correspondence ; their own vernacular dialect having never been written. With their neighbours, the Muhammedans, they speak, not the Persian, but the Turkish ; which here seems to be the general medium of communication among all the various tribes inhabiting this region, as Persians, Kurds, Armenians, Nestorians, Jews ; while each again has its own vernacular tongue, distinct from all the rest.

Among this people, so interesting in the character of their historical associations, but now sunk so low in the depths of ignorance and spiritual death, Mr. Perkins and Dr. Grant, with their families, took up their abode in November, 1835. Their object was the moral renovation of the people ; to kindle anew the light of life and truth in this remnant of an

ancient church, which “had a name to live, but was dead.” The way to this end lay through the intellect and heart ; to win and purify the one, and cultivate the other. The missionaries learned their language ; they endeavoured to gain the confidence of the clergy and the people ; they opened schools for the instruction of adults and of children. They succeeded in their efforts, and not a breath of opposition has ever been raised against them by ecclesiastics or people. On the contrary, the former regard and treat them as brethren, and all look upon them as friends and benefactors. A new impulse has been given, and bright vistas of knowledge and delight are opening up to many minds before covered with darkness. The missionaries found their pupils docile, and exceedingly apt and quick to learn. We have already mentioned priest Abraham’s English school ; Mr. Perkins was astonished at the success and rapid progress of the scholars. In general, so deep was their ignorance, that the every-day lessons of our smallest children seemed to them the loftiest heights of science. Peter Parley’s Geography was to them an unfathomable mine of wisdom, and led to the inquiry whether our worthy friend was not one of the *American saints* ; they supposing that such boundless knowledge could be possessed by no mortal less than a saint. Some of the ecclesiastics ere long took up the study of Hebrew, and a class was soon formed under the direction of Mr. Perkins. The affinity of their own language to the Hebrew gave them here great facilities ; and Mr. Perkins elsewhere remarks, that “their proficiency, with very little effort, was such as would do honor to an Andover lecture-room.”

A first and most pressing necessity was, to reduce to writing the common vernacular dialect of the people. A few slight attempts to do this had already been made by the Chaldean priest at Khosrova ; and these had been obtained and brought home by Messrs. Smith and Dwight, and served to prove to the learned world, that a dialect of the Syriac was still a living and spoken language.\* This object was prosecuted by Mr. Perkins with judgment and sense.

---

\* *Researches*, etc. II. p. 192. These tracts are now in the hands of Professor Roediger, of Halle, who has made good use of them ; see *Zeitschr. für die Kunde des Morgenl.* II. p. 77, *et seq.*

It was a matter of novelty and of great interest to the Nestorians to see their own tongue written down, and be able to read what they spoke, and just as they spoke it. The subsequent arrival of a press was to them a source of inexpressible delight, alike as a curiosity, and as holding out the pledge of a new era to these people. When the proof-sheet of the first tract in their language was brought and laid upon Mr. Perkins' table, — the first sheet, indeed, ever printed in that language and character, — his translators, the priests Abraham and Dunka, were struck with mute astonishment to see their language *in print*, and at length mutually exclaimed : “ It is time to give glory to God, that our eyes are permitted to behold the beginning of printed books for our people ! ” Well might they thus, in the simplicity and sincerity of their hearts, give glory to God ; for who can fully estimate the priceless boon ?

This vernacular language of the Nestorians Mr. Perkins justly describes as “ a modern dialect of the ancient Syriac, much barbarized by inversions, contractions, and abbreviations, and by the introduction of a great number of Persian, Kurdish, and Turkish words.” Yet, though thus corrupted, “ the body of the language comes directly from the vernacular ancient Syriac, as clearly as the modern Greek comes from the ancient.” Such, too, is the testimony of the scholars of Europe, who have examined the translations and specimens sent home by Mr. Perkins. Yet in the face of all these facts and of almost an historical necessity, there are those who hold this modern language to be derived from the ancient Chaldee, rather than the Syriac. We have ourselves heard Mr. Rassam, the companion of Mr. Ainsworth, himself a Chaldean by birth, from the neighbourhood of Mosul, scout the idea of the language of his people being any other than a very corrupt progeny of the Biblical Chaldee ; of which, by the way, he knew nothing ; so corrupt, indeed, as not to be worth the trouble of making it a written language. Yet this is the same dialect with that of the Nestorians of Oroomiah ; it is the language of a Christian population, themselves the remnant of an ancient church and people, among whom the ancient Syriac alone was the vernacular tongue. The position, indeed, is little other than absurd, that such a people should now be found speaking a dialect, not of the tongue of their ancestors, but of another

ancient people, with whom they had no other connexion than is indicated by the affinity of the two ancient dialects, the Chaldee and the Syriac. The absurdity has arisen from the kindred folly of attempting to make the modern papal Chaldeans an offshoot of the ancient Chaldeans.

The results of the Nestorian mission, so happily begun and successfully prosecuted, are cheering. The number of missionaries at Oroomiah, including Mr. Perkins and those who recently embarked with him, is seven, with their families ; besides a printer and two female assistants. Dr. Grant and two or three others are among the Nestorians of the mountains. The main station is at Oroomiah ; but there are seven other places for stated preaching among the villages of the plain. The higher seminary connected with the mission has about fifty pupils, of whom eighteen are females. There are twenty free schools in as many different villages, all taught by native priests or deacons. These contain four hundred and seventy pupils, of whom forty are girls. The press arrived in November, 1840 ; and in the year 1841, sixteen hundred volumes were printed, and three thousand six hundred tracts ; amounting in all to five hundred and ten thousand four hundred pages.\*

We must break off here. But we cannot refrain from commending this volume of Mr. Perkins to the favorable notice of all our readers, as another trophy of the enterprise and talent of American Missionaries, not only in the cause of truth and the Gospel, to which they are devoted, but also in the kindred fields of literature and science.

---

ART. VIII. — *Classical Studies ; Essays on Ancient Literature and Art. With the Biography and Correspondence of Eminent Philologists.* By BARNAS SEARS, President of Newton Theological Institution, B. B. EDWARDS, Professor in Andover Theological Seminary, and C. C. FELTON, Professor in Harvard University. Boston : Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln. 1843. 12mo. pp. 413.

THIS book brings back to us a pleasant vision of the life that “won our heart in our greener years ;” a life of tranquil

---

\* *Annual Report of the American Board*, Sept. 1842, p. 129.